

OFFICIAL TEXT

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Republic of Haiti Independence Day

On behalf of President Obama and the people of United States, I congratulate the people of the Republic of Haiti as they celebrate their 206th anniversary of independence on January 1, 2010.

This is an occasion to honor the history and heritage of Haiti and to remember the heroes who founded the first independent back republic, not just the icons such as Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Alexandre Petion, but also the countless men and women who stood up for their right to live as free people and left a legacy of freedom for future generations. Their accomplishment changed the face of our world, and their story continues to be an inspiration today.

Today we also salute the many contributions that Haitian-Americans have made to the culture and prosperity of the United States. Our two nations are bound by strong bonds of friendship and family, united both by our shared history and our common hopes for the future.

The United States stood with Haiti after the tragic hurricanes of 2008, and we remain committed to being a partner and a friend. This has been a year for rebuilding and renewal, and Haitians can be proud of their accomplishments. As 2010 begins, Haiti is poised for a better future, ready to lead its own development and make further improvements in economic growth, health, and security.

I offer my warmest wishes for a peaceful and prosperous year.

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